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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the portrayal of librarians in poetry written from 1958 to 1993 in order to find out whether technological and social changes which occurred during this period had any effect on the image of librarians. Content analysis was used in examining the 32 poems and the 36 librarians present in those poems. Adjectives and descriptions of the librarians were analyzed and evaluated to see whether the images were positive or negative and whether any change in the portrayal of librarians has come about through the years. Some of the major findings of the research are: the librarians in the poems are equally likely to be male or female; they are hard-working and enthusiastic about their work; and physical description is not a part of these poems. As a result, the typical old-maid librarian with mousy hair done in a bun stereotype is not present in the poems used in this content analysis. The coding sheet used in the analysis is appended. (Contains 68 references.) (Author/JLB)

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THE IMAGE OF LIBRARIANS IN POETRY, 1958-1993

A Master's Research Paper submitted to the
Kent State University School of Library and Information Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Library Science

by

Leslie A. Pultorak

August, 1993

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper was to examine the portrayal of librarians in poetry written from 1958 to 1993 in order to find out whether technological and social changes which occurred during this period had any effect on the image of librarians. Content analysis was used in examining the thirty-two poems and the thirty-six librarians present in those poems. Adjectives and descriptions of the librarians were analyzed and evaluated to see whether the images were positive or negative, and whether any change in the portrayal of librarians has come about through the years.

Some of the major findings of the research are: The librarians represented in the poems are equally likely to be male or female. They are hard-working and enthusiastic about their work. Generally, physical description is not a part of these poems. Therefore, the typical old-maid librarian with mousy hair done in a bun stereotype is not present in the poems used in the content analysis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES iv

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION 1

Background 1

Purpose of the Study 3

Definition of Terms 4

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW 5

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY 12

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS 14

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY 33

APPENDIX A

CODING SHEET 35

APPENDIX B

SOURCES CONSULTED 39

APPENDIX C

READING LIST 41

WORKS CITED 45

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: General Characteristics of the Librarian.....17

Table 2: Librarian's Competence and Abilities.....20

Table 3: General Description of Librarian's Work.....22

Table 4: Librarian's Specific Duties.....24

Table 5: Working with Patrons.....26

Table 6: Librarian's Attitudes.....28

Table 7: The Patron and the Librarian.....31

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

As discussed in Norman D. Stevens' article, "Our Image in the 1980s," an image is "...how we see ourselves and how others see us....[It is] our outward appearance" (Stevens 1988, 825). A stereotype, as defined by Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary (1989, 1156) is "a standardized mental picture that is held in common by members of a group and that represents an oversimplified opinion, affective attitude, or uncritical judgment." The mental picture that this paper is concerned with is that of the librarian, and it may be held by the general public, and even librarians themselves. Usually, the stereotype is considered to be negative: an unattractive old maid who lives to make sure patrons of the library keep quiet.

There is a need to study the image of librarians because, as discussed by Leslie Ann Pardo (1992, 2), "negative stereotypes of librarians hinder recruitment into the profession." In other words, students may choose not to become librarians because of these negative stereotypes. In addition, "librarians have recognized that a professional

image is a basic ingredient to their success on the job and in society in general" (Coffman, Beverley, Ginsburg, and Hardnett 1991, 134).

A major library journal, American Libraries, has found the issue of image to be important enough to run a regular column on the topic. It's called "Image--How They're Seeing Us" and it contains glimpses of librarians as they occur in popular media. This column began in 1985 and is continuing today.

There was even an Inter-Association Task Force set up in 1988 by the Special Libraries Association whose sole purpose was to "...determine exactly how society perceives librarians in order to prepare and implement a plan of action to change or enhance the image should the result indicate that it was necessary" (Hale 1990, 73). The Task Force surveyed the general public in order to find out this information and presented its findings in 1990 in the Inter-Association Task Force Report on Image (Coffman, et al. 1991).

Pauline Wilson (1982) also found the librarian's image important enough to devote an entire book to the subject. In Stereotypes and Status, she examines such issues as how the stereotype is formed and perpetuated, how librarians feel about their image, and how the stereotype affects librarians.

Joan R. Duffy further describes the ways that the stereotypes of

librarians are being studied in her article "Images of Librarians and Librarianship: A Study." She says that:

> the American Library Association and several state library associations are confronting the issue [of librarians' stereotypes]. Conferences highlight the importance of promoting a professional image at the personal level, specifically in daily interactions with people using libraries (Duffy 1990, 303).

Purpose of the Study

Poetry is a good medium in which to examine the image of librarians, since it deals mainly with imagery. When someone reads poetry, he or she instantly receives images that describe the content of the poem. When a librarian is portrayed in a poem, the reader immediately gets a sense of who the librarian is: what type of person the librarian is, what kind of personality he or she has. In other words, poetry is an effective relayer of information.

The objective of this research paper is to examine the portrayal of librarians in poetry published from 1958 to 1993. The intent of this research paper is to compare the image of the librarian in poetry from 1958 to 1993 with the image of the librarian in poetry written up to 1957 in order to see if the technological and social changes which occurred

from 1958 to 1993 had any effect on the stereotyping of librarians.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this research paper, librarian will mean any person who appears to work in a library, since authors (and readers) seem not to make distinctions between such library staff as librarians, clerks, and student workers. "Since the lay reader receives his impressions about librarianship from anyone the author wishes to call librarian it is only logical to refer to these same characters as librarians for this study" (Long 1957, 2).

Poem will mean any literature contained in the form of verses, whether blank verse or in rhyme. It may be written by librarians or non-librarians.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

There has been much literature written on the image of librarians: mainly, their negative stereotype. However, few articles are based on empirical data; most are opinions or general surveys of literature or mass media which happen to portray librarians in some way.

Nora K. Rawlinson (1989) wrote an editorial denouncing an advertisement which showed a stereotypical librarian. She writes that the advertisers basically don't bother to learn about what a librarian really does; advertisers portray librarians only as they think the public sees them. The negative portrayal of librarians in the mass media is complained about in an editorial by Elisabeth Barrowcliffe (1984).

In Karen A. Romanko's editorial in the "My Say" section of Publishers Weekly, she indicates that she is a librarian and describes herself to be totally unlike the stereotypical librarian: She is "...not an old lady..., [is] happily married,...[doesn't] wear a bun on [her]...head or orthopedic shoes on [her]...feet" (Romanko 1988, 88). She goes on to state her opinion that the general public has the wrong impression of librarians and that librarians need to make an effort to change their image (Romanko 1988). Mike Pearce (1974) takes this position, as well, and also brings up the fact that

male librarians probably have a worse stereotype than female librarians in that they are usually thought to be homosexual or feminine as well as possessing the traits of female librarians. Pearce feels the public should be educated to the fact that not all librarians conform to the popular stereotypes. E. Jane Philipps (1992), in her opinion-based article, begins by giving positive adjectives that would describe a librarian. She goes on to say that librarians have very important jobs and that they shouldn't be concerned with the public stereotypes. There have been many other editorials written concerning the image of librarians. Most basically give a point of view of the librarian's image and perhaps a way of dealing with it (Bowron 1989; Curran 1987; Manley 1991; Metcalfe 1971; Priestley 1975; Beaubien 1992; Toohey 1961; Murison 1975; Dougherty 1988). One editorial even goes so far as to remind discouraged librarians that even "Casanova was a librarian" (Dalby 1975, 5).

Some papers deal with the image of librarians as portrayed in various types of literature. Linda Barnhart (1991) examines the image of the librarian as portrayed in mystery novels published from 1980 to 1990. She uses content analysis to find out if the basic librarian stereotype is still present during this time period. Sue Connors (1990) looks at the portrayal of librarians in books, mainly novels. She points out differences in images, according to the different genres she is examining. Jane

Merrill Filstrup (1979) examines the image of the librarian in detective fiction written from 1930 to 1979. She describes the librarian as portrayed in each of the detective novels she cites. Another examination of librarians in detective novels is done by Mary Faith Pusey Pankin (1978). Katherine M. Heylman (1975) looks at the way librarians are depicted in twenty-two works of juvenile literature. She uses content analysis to determine whether certain characteristics of the librarians in these works are common enough to be called stereotypes. Marilyn Souders (1991) lists a number of literary works which contain librarians. Jeffrey Garret (1991) explores the medieval library and the monks as librarians as portrayed in The Name of the Rose. Yet another article presents a general survey of the librarian in literature (Cowell 1980).

Several papers examine how the librarian is portrayed in the mass media. Abram and Weaver (1990), Osborn (1971), and "The Munch is Off" (1972) all examine the librarian in advertising.

An extensive paper by Rosalee McReynolds (1985) looks at the ways in which librarians are portrayed in popular culture in the United States from 1876 to 1950. She includes movies, novels, magazine covers, and general attitudes about the status of women, which would affect the image of librarians, during this period of American history. An article by Martha Merrill includes some statistics regarding the reality of who

librarians really are (for example, the percentage of male librarians vs. the percentage of female librarians). The statistics are then compared to the way librarians are portrayed in advertising and general mass media. The first part of an article written by Julian Moynahan (1974) focuses on the difference in atmosphere of different libraries. He then goes on to discuss portrayals in various novels, such as Goodbye, Columbus.

Some papers are concerned with the general image of librarians. One article, concerning the ancient Romans' views of librarians, was based on a letter dated around A.D. 143 (Houston 1989). Another paper gives an alphabetical listing of the common aspects that usually make up the total image of the librarian (Stevens 1990). Norman D. Stevens (1988) describes the evolution of the librarian's image throughout history and concentrates on the image of the 1980s. Another work by Stevens (1991) examines what the ideal reference librarian should be like. Pauline Wilson (1981) suggests that the librarian's stereotype and perhaps even the name need to be changed in order to attract new students into schools of library science. Paul B. Wiener (1983) says that librarians need to become more flexible in their job description in order to explode the old stereotypes. Laura Miller (1989) discusses how librarians around the world view their profession. Dee Garrison (1977) discusses the way the image of librarians was initially affected when women first began working as librarians.

Many other papers examine the popular image of the librarian (Sapp 1986; Kirkendall1986; Land 1988; Schuman 1990; Veaner 1984; Slater 1981; Newmyer 1976; Freeman and Carlin 1986; Dwyer 1986).

Other papers help librarians deal with or try to change the unpopular stereotype. These works are generally concerned with the fact that librarians tend to become angry when yet another movie, advertisement, or book features a "typical" librarian. The articles then explain how the offended parties may counter the image: through dress, writing letters, or by subtle changes in personality (Wallace 1989; Sable 1983; Richards and Ellirt 1988; Nardelli 1990; Kies 1989; Bean 1987). There is even a twenty-nine-page pamphlet by Meg Paul and Jennifer Evans available that will guide librarians in changing their image (Rochester 1989).

In comparison with the literature found above, the amount of works which are based on empirical data is relatively small. One study examines how male librarians are perceived. The librarian himself, students (both MLS and non-MLS), and other librarians (male and female) are surveyed (Morrisey and Case 1988). The nonverbal communications of reference librarians are examined in another study (DeVore-Chew, Roberts, and Smith 1988).

Some of these papers examine the ways in which non-librarians perceive librarians. Kaycee Hale (1990) presented the preliminary results

of the Image Task Force's questionnaire concerning the perception of librarians. Non-librarians, especially those in high-ranking positions, were given questionnaires to fill out in order to find out how they perceived librarians. The purpose of an article by U. Bloch and T. Bloch (1981) is to see what high school students think about the real jobs of the librarian. A group of high school girls was surveyed, and the data received from that survey are included in this article. Pamela Huegel Jordan (1991) attempted to find out how librarians are viewed by children by giving a questionnaire to two groups of children and then tabulating the results. She wanted to see if the children agreed with the negative stereotypical traits usually given to librarians by the general public. Karlene K. Edwards (1989) surveyed principals to find out what they thought of the school librarians and the necessary duties and skills needed in the job. Similarly, Herrin, Pointon, and Russell (1986) conducted a study in which they examined traits of school library media specialists. Lee and Hall (1973) gave questionnaires to female library science students in order to find out how they perceived librarians' jobs.

Another article by Harris and Sue-Chan (1988) examines how various elements in society, such as the media, affect library patrons' views of librarians. Included is a comparison between lawyers' images and librarians' images. Bourkoff and Wooldridge (1985) conducted a content

analysis of newspaper articles containing reference to librarians.

Almost no papers were found which deal with the image of librarians in poetry. One, an article by Norman D. Stevens (1989), includes poetry written by librarians about libraries throughout the twentieth century. However, only two poems which mention librarians are included, and it isn't based on empirical data. The second is a Master's thesis on stereotypes of librarians in American belles-lettres up to 1957 by Lucille Eileen Long (1957), and it includes a small section on the stereotypical image of librarians in poetry. The third is an article by Donald E. Collins (1983), and it is concerned mainly with the image of librarians in poetry written from 1905 to 1930. Based upon this information, the image of librarians in poetry needs some attention.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Content analysis was used in the research design. The poems collected all contained some type of reference to a librarian or librarians, and they were published from 1958 to 1993, in order to examine whether the technological and social changes which occurred within this period had any effect on the image of the librarian.

The population consisted of thirty-two poems which contained references, either by direct description or merely through imagery, to thirty-six librarians. The poems were obtained using the resources and collections of the Kent State University library and Cleveland Public Library. The sample consisted of these same thirty-two poems and thirty-six librarians. No boundaries were placed upon the poems, meaning they could have been from any country, and written by both librarians and non-librarians.

The methods by which the poems were collected to be used in the research were: literature searches in various sources (see Appendix C), manual searching of poetry anthologies, and bibliographies from relevant articles.

In coding the data (see the coding sheet in Appendix A), the

adjectives used in the poem to describe the librarian were coded according to their strength. In addition, provisions in the coding system were made in order to accommodate those poems which didn't really use many (or any) adjectives, but instead attempted to give the reader a feeling about the librarian by using imagery rather than direct description. Each poem had one coding sheet, and when the results for all poems were collected, the results were calculated and put into statistical tables.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

General Characteristics of the Librarian

The majority of the poems (86%) did not give direct descriptions of the librarians (i.e., the authors of the poems didn't describe the librarians in terms of adjectives). Instead, most of the authors tried to give the reader a feeling of what the librarian was like by giving details such as the actions of the librarian or how the librarian treats patrons. For example,

> The kind white-haired lady who said
> she would search forever
> is home in bed (McFarland 1989, 51).

This passage gives the reader the impression that this particular librarian says that she will do everything in her power to help the patron, but instead gives up (or doesn't even try) and leaves for home without a guilty conscience. After all, she is able to go to bed even after disappointing a patron.

Only a few poems use direct description (about 14%), such as this poem by Ed Ochester (1983, 205):

In the library
the silent girl,
the ugly one,
waits out the spring above her books....

Here, the reader is told how to think of the librarian. She is quiet and definitely not beautiful.

It was found that the librarians in the poems had an equal chance of being male or female (in each case it was assumed that if the author was writing in the first person, but didn't specify the sex of the librarian in the poem, that the librarian in the poem was the same sex as the author). About 28% of the librarians in the poems were male, while 33% were female. The majority were female, but the percentage isn't high enough to say that librarians in poetry tend to be female.

As far as age goes, in most poems it is hard to determine the age group of the librarians. Six of the thirty-six librarians could be determined as being either "young" or "old." Obviously, there is no set age range for librarians in poetry.

Several librarians were portrayed as being outgoing (about 28%). Only one could be coded as very shy, thus shattering the stereotype of the quiet librarian.

Overall, the librarians in these poems were given a positive portrayal, as far as their general characteristics went. Sixty-one percent

had a positive image, while only about 17% were shown in a decidedly negative light.

Librarian's Appearance:

In general, nothing was said about the librarians' appearance. In only one poem were looks mentioned (Ochester 1983). Nothing in any of the poems was said about the librarians' hairstyles. Clothing was not described in any way, and only one poem had a librarian who wore glasses: "What shelf did I put my spectacles on...(Colegrove 1971, 213). Only two poems described the librarian's hair color.

A summary of the general characteristics of the librarian is presented in Table 1.

Librarian's Competence and Abilities

According to the poems, librarians were either portrayed as being educated, or their educational background was not specified. This seems to imply that few, if any, librarians are uneducated. Few poems mentioned technology, let alone the librarian's use of it. However, in the poems that did mention the librarian and technology, the librarian was seen as being knowledgeable of the latest technology in his or her field (19%); using some sort of technology as part of the job (about 14%); using the latest technology to help patrons (8%); being efficient while using the technology

Table 1

General Characteristics of the Librarian

Characteristics (N=36)	f	%
Description Derived Mainly from Direct Description in Work		
Yes	5	13.89
No	31	86.11
Subtotal	36	100.00
Description Derived Mainly from Imagery		
Yes	31	86.11
No	5	13.89
Subtotal	36	100.00
Sex		
Male	10	27.78
Female	12	33.33
Not specified	14	38.89
Subtotal	36	100.00
Age		
Old	3	8.33
Middle-aged	0	0.00
Young	3	8.33
Not specified	30	83.33
Subtotal	36	100.00
Personality		
Meek	1	2.78
Reserved	2	5.55
Outgoing	10	27.78
Not specified	23	63.89
Subtotal	36	100.00

Table 1 (continued)

General Characteristics of the Librarian

Characteristics (N=36)	f	%
Physical Strength		
Weak	1	2.78
Average	0	0.00
Strong	0	0.00
Not specified	35	97.22
Subtotal	36	100.00
Overall Portrayal		
Negative	6	16.67
Neutral	8	22.22
Positive	22	61.11
Subtotal	36	100.00

(almost 17%); and using computers for some part of the job (11%).

See Table 2 for a summary of the librarian's competence and abilities.

General Description of Librarian's Work

The librarian of poetry tends to have a stressful job (33%); he or she definitely doesn't just sit around all day (almost 56%). As far as being accurate in his or her work, not many poems made that an issue. Only eight librarians seemed to be accurate (22%), while three librarians (8%) could be defined as being inaccurate. (See Table 3.)

Librarian's Specific Duties

A large number of librarians (almost 42%) answered reference questions. Many of the librarians were assumed to be reference librarians, while a few of the others tended to be catalogers (19%). Not much was mentioned about the other "librarian" duties such as statistics (one librarian); filing (one librarian); supervising staff (one librarian); shelving books (one librarian); working at circulation (three librarians); collecting fines (two librarians); interlibrary loan requests (one librarian) and keeping the library neat (one librarian). Evidently, reference

Table 2

Librarian's Competence and Abilities

Competence and Abilities (N=36)	f	%
Educated		
Uneducated	0	0.00
Educated	11	30.56
Not specified	25	69.44
Subtotal	36	100.00
Has knowledge of latest technology in field		
Yes	7	19.44
No	1	2.78
Not specified	28	77.78
Subtotal	36	100.00
Uses technology as part of job		
Yes	5	13.89
No	0	0.00
Not specified	31	86.11
Subtotal	36	100.00
Uses latest technology when helping patrons		
Yes	3	8.33
No	0	0.00
Not specified	33	91.67
Subtotal	36	100.00
Technological skills		
Inept	0	0.00
Average	0	0.00
Efficient	6	16.67
Not specified	30	83.33
Subtotal	36	100.00

Table 2 (continued)

Librarian's Competence and Abilties

Competence and Abilities (N=36)	f	%
Uses computers		
Yes	4	11.11
No	1	2.78
Not specified	31	86.11
Subtotal	36	100.00

Table 3

General Description of Librarian's Work

Description (N=36)	f	%
Librarian's job		
Easy	0	0.00
Average	4	11.11
Stressful	12	33.33
Not specified	20	55.56
Subtotal	36	100.00
Librarian's work		
Inaccurate	3	8.33
Average	0	0.00
Accurate	8	22.22
Not specified	25	69.45
Subtotal	36	100.00
Reads while supposed to be working		
Yes	0	0.00
No	4	11.11
Not specified	32	88.89
Subtotal	36	100.00
Seems to do nothing all day		
Yes	0	0.00
No	20	55.56
Not specified	16	44.44
Subtotal	36	100.00

questions and cataloging were thought to be two of the most important or, at least, most common, duties of the librarian.

See Table 4 for a summary of the specific duties of the librarian.

Working with Patrons

The librarian, according to the poems, does seem to help patrons (as opposed to staying in a back room and not having any contact with patrons). About 44% of the thirty-six librarians help patrons. Only about 6% teach the patron, that is either trying to instruct him on how to find the materials himself or teach him facts:

> Librarians are busy creatures!
> They're constantly a group of teachers.
> At the desk or on the phone,
> Or working with a child alone (Carter 1959, 265)

Surprisingly, only one librarian was caught telling the patrons to keep quiet:

> Their only weakness is they crush
> The verbal patron. Stop her gush
> By pursing lips and murmuring, "Shush!" (Carter 1958b, 164).

Three librarians (8%) encourage the patrons to read, while five librarians (14%) recommend books. (See Table 5.)

Table 4

Librarian's Specific Duties

Duties	(N=36)	f	%
Answers reference questions			
	Yes	15	41.67
	No	0	0.00
	Not specified	21	58.33
	Subtotal	36	100.00
Keeps statistics			
	Yes	1	2.78
	No	0	0.00
	Not specified	35	97.22
	Subtotal	36	100.00
Works on the filing			
	Yes	1	2.78
	No	0	0.00
	Not specified	35	97.22
	Subtotal	36	100.00
Supervises staff			
	Yes	1	2.78
	No	1	2.78
	Not specified	34	94.44
	Subtotal	36	100.00
Catalogs materials			
	Yes	7	19.44
	No	0	0.00
	Not specified	29	80.56
	Subtotal	36	100.00

Table 4 (continued)

Librarian's Specific Duties

Duties (N=36)	f	%
Shelves materials		
Yes	1	2.78
No	0	0.00
Not specified	35	97.22
Subtotal	36	100.00
Works at circulation		
Yes	3	8.33
No	3	8.33
Not specified	30	83.33
Subtotal	36	100.00
Collects fines		
Yes	2	5.56
No	0	0.00
Not specified	34	94.44
Subtotal	36	100.00
Interlibrary loan requests		
Yes	1	2.78
No	1	2.78
Not specified	34	94.44
Subtotal	36	100.00
Keeps library neat		
Yes	2	55.56
No	1	2.78
Not specified	33	91.67
Subtotal	36	100.00

Table 5

Working with Patrons

Working with patrons (N=36)	f	%
Helps patrons		
Yes	16	44.44
No	0	0.00
Not specified	20	55.56
Subtotal	36	100.00
Instructs patrons		
Yes	2	5.56
No	0	0.00
Not specified	34	94.44
Subtotal	36	100.00
Makes sure patrons are quiet		
Yes	1	2.78
No	0	0.00
Not specified	35	97.22
Subtotal	36	100.00
Encourages reading		
Yes	3	8.33
No	0	0.00
Not specified	33	91.67
Subtotal	36	100.00
Recommends books		
Yes	5	13.89
No	0	0.00
Not specified	31	86.11
Subtotal	36	100.00

Librarian's Attitudes

Three of the librarians in the poems tried to censor materials:

> Mr. P--I have heard it rumoured
> That you, humanist, librarian with a license,
> In the shady privacy of your glassed room
> Tore up my book of poems (Layton 1958, 50).

A few of the librarians do love books (about 19%). However, the attitude toward patrons is not the same. Only 11% could be said to like the patrons. A great many librarians are enthusiastic (47%) and hard-working (56%) when it comes to their job. New technology doesn't seem to be a hurdle for the poetic librarian. Almost 6% of the librarians use new technology willingly, while almost 14% use it enthusiastically. Finally, when approached for help, 14% are helpful, and 22% do everything they can for the patron.

Table 6 contains a summary of the librarian's attitudes.

The Patron and the Librarian

Patrons' dislike and respect for the librarian seem to be about equal. Eight percent of the librarians appear to be disliked, while 11% of them are liked. The patrons in the poems seem to realize that part of the librarian's job is to help them, and 36% of the librarians are readily

Table 6

Librarian's Attitudes

Attitudes (N=36)	f	%
Toward patrons' access of materials		
Believes in censorship	3	8.33
Indifferent	0	0.00
Believes in free access	0	0.00
Not specified	33	91.67
Subtotal	36	100.00
Toward books		
Hates books	1	2.78
Indifferent	1	2.78
Loves books	7	19.44
Not specified	27	75.00
Subtotal	36	100.00
Toward patrons		
Hates patrons	1	2.78
Indifferent	1	2.78
Loves patrons	4	11.11
Not specified	30	83.33
Subtotal	36	100.00
Toward job		
Hates job	1	2.78
Apathetic	1	2.78
Doesn't mind the job	5	13.89
Enthusiastic	17	47.22
Not specified	12	33.33
Subtotal	36	100.00

Table 6 (continued)

Librarian's Attitudes

Attitudes (N=36)	f	%
Toward working		
Lazy	0	0.00
Average	2	5.55
Hard-working	20	55.56
Not specified	14	38.89
Subtotal	36	100.00
Toward new technology		
Avoids using	0	0.00
Uses grudgingly	0	0.00
Uses willingly	2	5.55
Uses enthusiastically	5	13.89
Not specified	29	80.56
Subtotal	36	100.00
When approached for help		
Ignores patron	0	0.00
Apathetic	1	2.78
Helpful	5	13.89
Does everything possible to help	8	22.22
Not specified	22	61.11
Subtotal	36	100.00

approached by the patron. Twenty-eight percent of the patrons even use the librarian as their only source of help (rather than the card catalog, for example). The majority of the patrons approach the librarian with a reference question (33%). However, even though a majority of patrons think well of the librarian, 14% still feel that the librarian does nothing all day. (See Table 7.)

Librarian's Relationships

Not much could be found concerning the librarian's relationships. The authors didn't really say whether the librarians were married, dated regularly, had any friends (whether in or outside of work). However, one librarian did live alone in a kind of fantasy world:

> Friends seldon called, but she would often dine
> By candlelight with courtesan or sage,
> And cavaliers who lent a courtly touch
> Whenever they would pledge her name in rare wine (Avrett 1959, 442).

Librarian's Life Outside the Library

Not much was said about the outside life of the librarian. However, six were found to read in their spare time.

Table 7

The Patron and the Librarian

Patron and librarian (N=36)	f	%
Patron's attitude toward librarian		
Dislike	3	8.33
Indifference	0	0.00
Respect	4	11.11
Not specified	29	80.56
Subtotal	36	100.00
Patron readily approaches librarian for help		
Yes	13	36.11
No	0	0.00
Not specified	23	63.89
Subtotal	36	100.00
Patron uses librarian as primary tool in search for materials		
Yes	10	27.78
No	0	0.00
Not specified	26	72.22
Subtotal	36	100.00
Patron's reason for consulting librarian		
Reference question	12	33.33
Directional question	2	5.56
Check-in/check-out/return materials	0	0.00
ILL request	0	0.00
Other	2	5.56
Not specified	20	55.55
Subtotal	36	100.00

Table 7 (continued)

The Patron and the Librarian

Patron and librarian (N=36)	f	%
Patron thinks librarian does nothing all day		
Yes	5	13.89
No	3	8.33
Not specified	28	77.78
Subtotal	36	100.00

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

The librarians surveyed in the poems seemed not to concur with any of the normal stereotypes usually associated with librarians. If these poems are taken alone and compared with the findings of the study by Lucille Eileen Long, it could be said that librarians are no longer stereotypical. Long (1957, 52) found that "the first characteristic [of the stereotypical librarian] is that the librarian is an unattractive, almost eccentric, old maid without style, taste, or charm." However, no mention of any consequence was made in the sample of thirty-six poems which alluded to this "first characteristic."

The second characteristic is "that librarianship is a very respectable vocation indicating high morals, virtue, and gentility" (10). Nothing like that was found in this study.

Long's third characteristic is "that despite small salaries, librarians are devoted" (55). Again, no mention of the amount of pay was made in this sample of poems. The librarians, however, are hard-working and enthusiastic.

The "fourth standard idea about the librarian is that she is of an

extremely scholarly or bookish nature" (15). Though 19% of the librarians in this study love books and 31% can be said to be educated, that doesn't say that the librarians of today's study are "extremely scholarly or bookish" (15).

Long notes that the librarian likes to have the library quiet: "There is a direct relationship between quiet and the proper use of the library" (60). No evidence could be found to uphold that stereotype in the poems written from 1958 to 1993.

In reading the poems from this study, it can be seen that technological and social changes may have indeed had an effect on the portrayal of the librarian in poetry. In the poems included in Long's study, no mention is made of computers (they had not come into practical library use when she did her study). She does note, however, that the poems seem to acknowledge the fact that it requires a great deal of learning to become a librarian. "Several of the poems stressed how complicated it is to do all the skills required to be a real librarian" (61).

The librarian has evolved, according to the images as seen in the poems, from 1958-1993.

APPENDIX A

Coding Sheet

Title of Poem:_____
Author:_____
Title of Journal or Anthology:_____
Date of Publication:_____

General Description of the Librarian

Description derived mainly from direct description: __yes __no

Description derived mainly from imagery: __yes __no

Sex: __M __F __not specified

Age: __old __middle-aged __young __not specified

Personality: __meek __reserved __outgoing __not specified

Physical strength: __weak __average __strong __not specified

Overall portrayal: __negative __neutral __positive

Librarian's Appearance

Looks: __ugly __plain __attractive __beautiful __not specified

Hairstyle: __unflattering __nondescript __stylish __not specified

Particular hairstyle: __modern __old-fashioned __not specified

Hair color: __red __blonde __brown __grey __white __not specified

Eyewear: __glasses __contact lenses __no eyewear __not specified

Clothing: __dowdy __plain __fashionable __not specified

Librarian's Competence and Abilities

Education: __uneducated __educated __not specified

Has knowledge of latest technology in field: __yes __no __not specified

Uses latest technology as part of job: __yes __no __not specified

Uses latest technology when helping patrons: __yes __no __not specified

Technological skills: __inept __average __efficient __not specified

Uses computers: __yes __no __not specified

General Description of the Librarian's Work

Librarian's job is: __easy __average __stressful __not specified

Librarian's work is: __inaccurate __average __accurate __not specified

Keeps statistics: __yes __no __not specified

Reads while working: __yes __no __not specified

Seems to do nothing all day: __yes __no __not specified

Librarian's Specific Duties

Answers reference questions: __yes __no __not specified

Keeps statistics: __yes __no __not specified

Works on the filing: __yes __no __not specified

Supervises staff: __yes __no __not specified

Catalogs materials: __yes __no __not specified

Shelves materials: __yes __no __not specified

Works at circulation: __yes __no __not specified

Collects fines: __yes __no __not specified

Interlibrary loan requests: __yes __no __not specified

Keeps library neat: __yes __no __not specified

Working with Patrons

Helps patrons: __yes __no __not specified

Instructs patrons: __yes __no __not specified

Makes sure patrons are quiet: __yes __no __not specified

Encourages reading: __yes __no __not specified

Recommends books: __yes __no __not specified

Librarian's Attitudes

Toward patrons' access of materials: __believes in censorship __indifferent
__believes in free access __not specified

Toward books: __hates books __indifferent __loves books __not specified

Toward patrons: __hates patrons __indifferent __loves patrons __not specified

Toward job: __hates job __apathetic __doesn't mind the job __enthusiastic
__not specified

Toward working: __lazy __average __hard-working __not specified

Toward new technology: __avoids using __uses grudgingly __uses willingly
__uses enthusiastically __not specified

When approached for help: __ignores patron __apathetic __is helpful
__does everything possible to help __not specified

The Patron and the Librarian

Patron's attitude toward librarian: __dislike __indifference __respect
__not specified

Patron readily approaches librarian for help: __yes __no __not specified

Patron uses librarian as primary tool in search for materials: __yes __no __not specified

Patron's reason for consulting librarian: __reference question __directional question __check-in/check-out/return material(s) __ILL request __other __not specified

Patron thinks the librarian does nothing all day: __yes __no __not specified

Librarian's Relationships

Friends with co-workers: __yes __no __not specified

Has an active social life: __yes __no __not specified

Has friends outside of work: __yes __no __not specified

When with opposite sex: __uncomfortable __neutral __comfortable __flirtatious __not specified

In love with someone: __yes __no __not specified

Fantasizes about someone: __yes __no __not specified

Sexual preference: __heterosexual __homosexual __bisexual __not specified

Dates regularly: __yes __no __not specified

Asked out regularly: __yes __no __not specified

Married: __yes __no __not specified

Lives alone: __yes __no __not specified

Librarian's Life Outside the Library

Reads in spare time: __yes __no __not specified

Has a personal library: __yes __no __not specified

Has hobby unrelated to job: __yes __no __not specified

Has a strong imagination: __yes __no __not specified

APPENDIX B

Sources Consulted

The following online files available through DIALOG were searched for articles relating to the proposed research topic:

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AMERICA: HISTORY & LIFE, covering the period from 1963 to 1993.

ARTS & HUMANITIES SEARCH, covering the period from 1980 to 1993.

BNA DAILY NEWS, covering the period from 06/01/90 to 03/31/93.

CURRENT CONTENTS SEARCH, covering the period from 1990 to 1993.

DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS, covering the period from 1861 to April 1993.

ERIC, covering the period from 1966 to February 1993.

INFORMATION SCIENCE ABSTRACTS, covering the period from 1966 to October 1992.

LISA, covering the period from 1969 to November 1992.

RILM, covering the period from 1971 to 1987.

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